

COUNCIL OF SOCIAL AGENCIES OF NEWARK, IRVINGTON AND WEST HUDSON
45 Branford Place
Newark 2, N. J.

Address Given at Panel on "What Does the Public Expect of Public Welfare?"

By Mrs. Duane Minard, Jr., Montclair, N. J.

I am speaking on behalf of the Citizen hyphen taxpayer. Essentially, of course, this is one and the same person but for the purpose of philosophies I would like to speak first as one and then as the other. I will not presume to evaluate the job done by the Public Assistance programs in New Jersey except to say the problem is growing be geometrical progressions and this is not success.

Rather, I would like to delineate the philosophy of what I as a citizen want done by the public assistance I as a taxpayer buy. First, I want everyone fed, clothed, housed and his medical needs met. This, of course, is a relative requirement and realistically and perhaps fairly I set my standard of these services low. Secondly, I want hope for the future. Because of this I would require additional things as necessities for children. I want a stable situation in which each child can grow up to his own best potential whether this be his own home, a foster home or an institution. I want him educated to his greatest capability both academically and skillwise. I want each child to grow up with a moral concept of his duties and responsibilities as a citizen as well as his rights and I want each child to have some religious training.

As a taxpayer my philosophy is that each man is entitled to the fruits of his labor deducting in taxes only that which is his fair share for his life in a community. When the expense of community living makes too deep an inroad upon the reward of a man for his work, he loses his incentive to produce. Said in another way, there is a limit to the amount of money available in taxes. Tax money should always be a sacred trust to those who dispense it, and every penny collected for social welfare must produce to its utmost. This is more true of tax money used for social welfare, perhaps, than any other tax money because I believe it is the most essential service taxpayers provide. I do not think relief is a right - it is a gift. It signifies man's humanity to man and that people, all people, are the world's most precious possession. This contribution of the taxpayer to public welfare is his investment toward the reestablishment of self-sufficiency to those of his peers who now, in good faith, need help.

We cannot let this public welfare program countenance family instability unto the forth and fifth generation. In the first place, we can't finance it and more importantly, we cannot afford to lose that many people to the indignity and degradation of being inadequate in their only life. In the light of this citizen philosophy I think all Public Welfare must be aimed at rehabilitation. We must also learn when to fish or cut bait. If a family cannot be made to function as a group even with the best of care, we must not throw time, money and the next generation away but break it up so that part can be saved and the rest continue to exist.